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Approved For Release 2003/12/02 : CIA-RDP75-00001R000300430056-7 LANSDALE CHOICE STIRS WASHINGTON

New Lodge Aide's Approach Known as Unorthodox

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Aug. 20 — The return of Edward G. Lansdale to South Vietnam next week continues to be a topic of lively discussion among officials and diplomats here.

That is so partly because he is the sponsor of some extremely controversial ideas on how to make and win a Vietnamese non-Communist revolution.

He is a retired Air Force major general who helped put down the Communist-led Hukbalahap rebellion in the Philippines in the early postwar years and, as an agent of the Central Intelligence Agency, helped to establish the regime of Ngo Dinh Diem in South Vietnam a decade ago.

His ideas and methods of operation have been described as blunt and unorthodox. He has made many enemies, especially in the military services, and was kept under tight control at the Defense Department from 1957 until 1963.

Mr. Lansdale — he is said to prefer his civilian title — has also inspired warm support. But, in the words of one high-ranking sponsor of his return to Vietnam, Mr. Lansdale is "not the easiest man to get along with."

McNamara Denies Opposition

Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara denies persistent reports that he opposed the appointment. In any event, President Johnson, on the advice of Lansdale supporters in the Senate and elsewhere, agreed with the new United States Ambassador to Saigon, Henry Cabot Lodge, that Mr. Lansdale should be asked to reassemble some of his personal aides and given a chance to apply his ideas.

Some critics contend Mr. Lansdale should be faulted also for his early support of Ngo Dinh Diem and his judgment a decade ago that the Diem Government could carry out a democratic social revolution.

Mr. Lansdale will serve as a special assistant to Mr. Lodge, acting publicly and not through the C.I.A.

Other United States officials with overlapping responsibilities for aid and propaganda and some high-ranking South Vietnamese are expected to come into conflict with Mr. Lansdale. But the President has been described as prepared to gamble on the outcome.



Associated Press

CONTROVERSIAL: Edward G. Lansdale, to return to South Vietnam as aide to Henry Cabot Lodge.

On leaving Vietnam in 1956, Mr. Lansdale apparently believed that the seeds of a successful social revolution had been planted. But he decided some time before the overthrow of President Diem in 1963 that the momentum of the revolution had been lost because the South Vietnamese leader had shut himself off from the people.

Mr. Lansdale has long insisted that a Communist revolution must be resisted through a democratic revolution and that, therefore, the United States had to overcome its traditional fears of vigorously exporting political ideas, of interfering in other nations' affairs, and of undermining military action through social change.

Author of Many Papers

He wrote many papers along these lines at the Defense Department and summarized his views last October in an article in the quarterly magazine Foreign Affairs. The hour in South Vietnam is terribly late, he said, but he expressed the view that there was still time for Americans to shape the fate of the country.

The Communists, he wrote, have let loose a revolutionary idea in Vietnam, and "it will not die by being ignored, bombed or smothered by us."

The answer, he suggested, has to be a "better idea," the creation of a political base and formulation of a patriotic cause that could inspire sacrifice and unity.

United States experiences in tutoring Germany, Japan and the Philippines in political ideas should have persuaded the nation to try the same thing else-

It would be a "drastic" change for most American officials to give political advice "with a high content of American idealism," he wrote, and some might do it badly. But it must be done, he said.

Mr. Lansdale said there were no short cuts available by which some universally loved Vietnamese leader could be chosen to embody the necessary idea.

The most realistic gift of the United States, he suggested, is to "concentrate above everything else on helping the Vietnamese leadership create the conditions which will encourage

the discovery and most rapid possible development of a patriotic cause so genuine that the Vietnamese willingly will pledge to it 'their lives, their fortunes, their sacred honor'."

Specifically, he urged the following:

- Help in creating a stable South Vietnamese Government so that its leaders can pay attention to the future instead of the protection of their own careers. Moreover, he said, it should be clearly established as a caretaker government with plans to hold an election as soon as a majority of the population can vote by secret ballot, free of threat.

- Help in the establishment of new political leaders and parties, possibly with a role for them in an assembly of notables. He said a practical task for it might be the creation of committees to check on hamlets and villages and to certify them as ready for free elections of local officials.

- Reshaping the local aid program to provide rewards for stable conditions rather than to buy the loyalties of the people. This should be supplemented, he went on, by political attention to the economic organizations of farmers and others that will develop from aid.

- Reorientation of military thinking to "make it the No. 1 priority for the military to protect and help the people."

"When the military opens fire at long range, whether by infantry weapons, artillery or air strike, on a reported Vietcong concentration in a hamlet or village full of civilians, the Vietnamese officers who give those orders and the American advisers who let them 'get away with it' are helping defeat the cause of freedom," Mr. Lansdale wrote.

Military "civic-action" programs to defend the villages would accomplish little, he warned, unless respect and affection for civilians were expected of every soldier.

Mr. Lansdale is said to have been somewhat embarrassed by all the talk and publicity surrounding his mission. He is described as worried that too much will be expected of his group or that he will quickly encounter resistance from Americans and Vietnamese.